Present Modal Verbs of Deduction and Probability Exercise

Check through the different uses.

TYPE	USE	MODAL VERBS	EXAMPLE
1	to express possibilities for the future	COULD, MAY, MIGHT	It may rain tomorrow.
2	to express certainty	CAN'T, COULDN'T, MUST	She can't be Irish.
3	for possible explanations	COULD, MAY, MIGHT	She could be Scottish.

A Look at the following phrases and write in which type you think they are. Then fill the gaps.

TYPE

1 ☐ They (may/must).......................... be away for the weekend but I'm not sure.

2 ☐ He (can/could).......................... be French, judging by his accent.

3 ☐ They (can't/may).......................... still be out!

4 ☐ With luck, tomorrow (can't/could).......................... be a sunny day.

5 ☐ You (can/might).......................... be right but I'm going to check anyway.

6 ☐ The exam (can't/might).......................... be easy. You never know.

7 ☐ It (may/can't).......................... be true about a sauropod dinosaur living in Lake Telé in the Congo. It's impossible.

8 ☐ Dave reckons she's from The States but I think she (can't/might).......................... be from Scandinavia.

9 ☐ I (can't/might).......................... go to the party but I'm not sure yet.

10 ☐ This (must/could).......................... be the right answer but we'll have to check with your teacher to make sure.

11 ☐ She (can't/could).......................... steal things from shops. She's rich and famous.

12 ☐ I really think Real Madrid (can't/could).......................... lose the final of the King's Cup.

13 ☐ She's been revising 10 hours a day for 3 weeks. She (could/must).......................... be exhausted.

14 ☐ Nobody's answering. They (can't/must).......................... be out.

15 ☐ He (can't/may).......................... be from the USA. He doesn't speak English.

B Now write some examples of your own.

1 ....

2 ....

3 ....

4 ....

Answers

1 TYPE 1 They may be away for the weekend but I'm not sure.
2 TYPE 3 He could be French, judging by his accent.
3 TYPE 2 They can't still be out!
4 TYPE 1 With luck, tomorrow could be a sunny day.
5 TYPE 3 You might be right but I'm going to check anyway.
6 TYPE 1 The exam might be easy. You never know.
7 TYPE 2 It can't be true about a dinosaur living in Lake Telé in the Congo. It's impossible.
8 TYPE 3 Dave reckons she's from The States but I think she might be from Scandinavia.
9 TYPE 1 I might go to the party but I'm not sure yet.
10 TYPE 3 This could be the right answer but we'll have to check with your teacher to make sure.
11 TYPE 2 She can't steal things from shops. She's rich and famous.
12 TYPE 1 I really think Real Madrid could lose the final of the King's Cup.
13 TYPE 2 She's been revising 10 hours a day for 3 weeks. She must be exhausted.
14 TYPE 2 Nobody's answering. They must be out.
15 TYPE 2 He can't be from the USA. He doesn't speak English.